

crimes against Asian Americans. This week, the Senate is set to do the same on legislation regarding competition with China, and many of our colleagues are working hard to make further consensus possible on issues that have historically enjoyed bipartisan support, like transportation infrastructure.

Remember, this sort of collaboration on serious priorities is what the American people insisted upon just last November. They elected a 50–50 Senate, shrunk Democrats' majority in the House, and took President Biden up on a promise to unite the country. So the question at the outset of this work period is how Democrats will use their razor-thin majority over the next few weeks. Unfortunately, the Democratic leader already signaled his answer a week ago by laying out a June agenda that is transparently designed to fail.

As I understand it, Senate Democrats intend to focus this month on the demands of their radical base: exploiting the cause of pay fairness to send a windfall to trial lawyers; saddling hospitals, schools, and small businesses with crippling new legal burdens if they fail to keep pace with “woke” social norms; and opening an unprecedented new front in the left's war on the Second Amendment.

As written, these are not proposals aimed at earning bipartisan support. They are not designed to clear the Senate's necessarily high bar for ending debate. Bizarrely, it appears they are being floated in order to illustrate that the bar is too high.

After a spring in which the Senate has repeatedly passed mainstream legislation by wide margins, Democrats have decided that now—now is the time to argue that the legislative process is somehow broken.

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Let me say that again. Democrats' poster child for why the Senate should change its rules is a bill that would forcibly change the rules for elections in every State in America.

Their marquee bill, S. 1, is such a brazen political power grab that the question isn't whether it could earn bipartisan support; the question is how wide the bipartisan opposition will be. This is the bill the Democratic leader has placed at the vanguard of his campaign to destroy the filibuster, even though multiple Members of his own majority are now on the record objecting to it.

So make no mistake: Failing to sell reckless, wholesale changes to our democracy isn't proof that the guardrails should be removed; it is a reminder that they are there for a reason.

The American people rightly expect a 50–50 Senate to spend its time finding common ground, but our Democratic colleagues seem to believe that the most important expectations are those of their far-left fringe. They put for-

ward an agenda that is designed to fail, and fail it will.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Julien Xavier Neals, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

ELECTION PROTESTS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, imagine this: In one of the great nations of the world, there is a controversy over transition of power, the peaceful transfer of power. And in this country, those who are about to lose power are concerned—so concerned that their backers are turning to the streets. They plan on demonstrations against the supposed new leadership in their country, and people fear violence.

It was against this background that Nadav Argaman, the director of Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, made a rare public intervention on Saturday night, warning of discourse that is “liable to be interpreted by certain groups or by individuals as one that permits violent and illegal activity that is liable, heaven forbid, to reach mortal injury.” Without mentioning any politicians directly, Mr. Argaman added, “It is our duty to come out with a clear and decisive call to stop immediately the inciting and violent discourse. The responsibility for calming spirits and reining in the discourse rests on all of our shoulders.”

I bring this matter to the floor of the Senate because it parallels what we endured and experienced just a few months ago. I am sure you remember it well, Madam President. I do. The election last November, which was won by Joseph Biden over Donald Trump, the incumbent President, by some 7 million votes—one of the largest turnouts, if not the largest turnout, in the history of the United States. It was a decisive electoral college victory in the same margin that Trump had triumphed over Hillary Clinton just a few years before. Yet, because of the Big Lie and the denial by Donald Trump,

he inspired his followers to come to Washington, DC, and participate in a rally to protest, and not to come just any day but to come on January 6, 2021, of this year because that is when the electoral college votes would be counted.

We know what followed. We know that mob was turned loose in the streets of Washington and turned loose on the Capitol Building, and those who were here that day will never forget it. I can recall the Vice President of the United States being pulled from that chair you are sitting in, Madam President. He was taken out that door. It was about 2:15 in the afternoon. Then a member of the Capitol Police stood before us and warned us: Stay in your seats. This will be a safe place to be. We are going to gather all the staff around the walls here. Just sit tight.

Ten minutes later, he came back and said: Change of plans. The mob is advancing on this Chamber as we speak. Leave immediately.

Everyone picked up as fast as they could and left.

It was a scene that seemed so unrealistic, you wouldn't imagine it could happen in the Capitol of the United States of America. But the insurrectionist mob inspired by President Donald Trump was here for business. They were here to stop the ordinary course of business in the Senate and the House, which would announce at the end of the day the selection of Joseph Biden as our new President.

Now a parallel is taking place in Israel, and a new coalition to replace Benjamin Netanyahu is being contested by those who are going to march in the streets. The Israeli leaders—at least those in the security services—are begging people not to do it.

I put that in context to think that that idea in the United States somehow has taken root in Israel. I pray that nothing happens. I want nothing to happen there. But we should be forewarned to take this seriously. There are forces at work in the United States and Israel and other countries to stop the orderly transfer of power in a democratic nation. We ought to take that seriously. We ought to take it so seriously that we appoint a bipartisan Commission to investigate what happened here on January 6, 2021.

Just a few weeks ago, Republican Members of the House of Representatives were dismissing the January 6th events, the mob action here in the Capitol, and saying that they were somehow “orderly tourists.” That is what one of the Congressmen said, a Congressman from Georgia, a Republican. Those were “orderly tourists.” Look at those videos and imagine under any circumstance that you would describe them as “orderly tourists.” They weren't orderly tourists when you see five people losing their lives as a result of their actions and 140 of our law enforcement officials being personally attacked, many of them still bearing the scars of that day.

I bring this to the attention of the Senate and the American people because I think the answer is obvious. Israel is taking it seriously. They don't want a Trump-like mob to take control in their country.

We shouldn't be allowing this to happen, nor should we stop with what we have done and say no more will be said. This was a direct attack on our democracy. We cannot find, unfortunately, in the Republican leadership one Republican leader who will support this idea of a bipartisan Commission. When it comes to January 6, the job isn't finished.

The last point I will make is, we received a letter—an anonymous letter—from the Capitol Hill Police asking us to form this Commission and to get to the bottom of it. To think that we walk through this Capitol every day and those men and women are risking their lives for us and we would not even allow a bipartisan Commission to look into that day and the threats to the lives of those policemen on that day is shameful. It is disgraceful. It is unacceptable.

Senator SCHUMER said we will vote on it again. I hope we do, and frequently, so we can remind the American people who is taking this matter very seriously and who is not.

FARM WORKERS

Madam President, on another issue, on another topic, when the pandemic was first declared in March of last year, we entered a world of uncertainty. We were confronted with the reality that our schools and our workplaces were going to be shut down in the foreseeable future, family gatherings and get-togethers were going to be restrained, and our favorite places for relaxing and fun—restaurants and stores—were basically closed. But amid all these uncertainties, one thing remained constant and dependable: our domestic food supply. Despite the disruptions, panic buying, and supply chain bottlenecks that arose during the pandemic, our domestic food supply remained fundamentally intact every step of the way.

Over the past year, most of us had the assurance that when we stopped at a grocery store, there was plenty of food for our family, and when grocery store shelves started to run empty, we could always trust that more food was on the way because farmers were doing their job and distributors of food supply were doing the same. It goes to show that, thanks to American agriculture, we are blessed by abundance.

As we come together to commend the courageous doctors, nurses, and other frontline workers who have cared for our loved ones, there is another group of essential workers who have toiled alongside our farmers and ranchers to keep our families fed: farm workers.

I am sure most Americans know very little about the farm workers who supply the food we eat every day. In Illinois, we have 20,000 of these farm workers. They plant, harvest, and pick our State's most lucrative crops.

Across the country, we have 2.5 million farm workers. Roughly half of these 2.5 million are undocumented. These undocumented farm workers are part of our communities, and many are parents of American children. But despite the essential work they do to keep our families fed, their second-class status in America means that they are often subject to harassment, untenable working conditions, substandard housing, and they live under constant threat of deportation.

Last month, The Guardian news service published a piece on the working and living conditions for farm workers in southern Texas. I want to share a few passages about one worker in particular. Her name is Linda. Nina Lakhani writes that Linda "works six days a week, sometimes seven, putting food on Americans' tables but earns barely enough to cover the bills and depends on food stamps to feed her [own] family," her children.

After long days in the fields, [Linda] sleeps on an old couch in the kitchen-lounge as part of the house was left uninhabitable by a fire and a hurricane.

But she calls it home.

Her 11-year-old son [who has some learning disorders] sleeps on the other couch . . . two daughters share a bedroom where water leaks through a mouldy roof. The eldest, a 16-year-old . . . and her 6-month-old baby sleep in a room with cindered walls.

Last summer, [Linda] and her three teenage daughters contracted Covid-19. . . . Rather than risk going to an emergency room, a relative with legal immigration status crossed the border to Reynosa and purchased a small tank of oxygen [for Linda].

Linda has lived in the United States of America for more than 25 years. She is one of the many undocumented farm workers who keep my family and our families fed. Yet she herself can barely feed her own family. Her experience is not an isolated one.

I want to share one last passage from the article in The Guardian: "Even before the pandemic, farms were among the most dangerous workplaces in the country, where low-paid workers have little protection . . . long hours, repetitive strain injuries, exposures to pesticides, dangerous machinery, extreme heat and animal waste."

Now add this contagious virus that these workers face too.

According to the Environmental Working Group, more than a dozen States don't provide any form of PPE or COVID testing for farm workers, and there are no social distancing guidelines in place on these farms. In some cases, workers arrive to the fields in tightly packed trucks, and the crews reportedly share cups of water from the same cup during the day.

I think it would be accurate to classify these working conditions as dangerous, but these essential workers don't have the luxury of being able to advocate for themselves—because they are always under the shadow and risk of deportation.

We in the Senate can change that. We can pass a piece of bipartisan legis-

lation that has already passed the House. It is called the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. This legislation would fundamentally change the lives of hundreds of thousands of these farm workers who came to our rescue during the darkest days of the pandemic, who kept working despite the threat of COVID-19 and the fact that they had few creature comforts of their own.

This is legislation that has been in the making for years. It would provide a path to lawful, permanent residency for undocumented farm workers and their family members. That means they would be able to do the essential work they have already been doing without living in fear of being deported and losing their kids. It also means these workers could advocate for higher wages, safer working conditions, which would make our Nation's farm labor workforce more stable and strengthen the durability of our food supply chain.

Offering these farm workers a path to permanent residency is the least that we could do to acknowledge their tireless, back-breaking work during this pandemic. Over the past year, we have heard a lot of praise for the essential workers of America. I join them, of course. At our time of need, they did their job, sometimes at great personal cost. Now it is time to do our job and pass the Farm Workforce Modernization Act.

Enacting this legislation is not just about doing the right thing for workers; it is about doing the right thing for our economy and doing the right thing, period.

When the pandemic hit last year, it caused the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Twenty-two million jobs vanished in America. Millions of working families lost their source of income, and some, for the first time in their lives, struggled to put food on the table. Can you imagine how much worse this crisis would have been if our Nation was saddled with a food scarcity crisis as well? Thanks to our farmers and these farm workers I am speaking for today, we never faced it. It is one of the many examples of how immigrants make our country stronger. We take them for granted. They go to work every day and do the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs in America. Now we have to do something for them.

According to last year's census, America's population grew at the slowest rate since the 1930s. That is a warning sign for the future of our economy. If our population growth continues to slow, our Nation's tax base will shrink. It means we will have fewer working-age adults who can help support elderly Americans—a population that is expected to double over the next few decades. To grow our economy, we need to bring people out of the shadows so they can continue to contribute to America for years to come. So when we vote on legislation like the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, we are really voting for our economic future.